

**Saint Paul Planning Commission  
City Hall Conference Center  
15 Kellogg Boulevard West**

**Minutes June 29, 2007**

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, June 29, 2007, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

**Commissioners Present:** Mmes. Donnelly-Cohen, Faricy, Lu, McCall, Morton, Smitten, Wencl, and Messrs. Alton, Barrera, Bellus, Goodlow, Kramer, Margulies, Nelson, Rosemark, and Spaulding.

**Commissioners Absent:** Ms. \*Porter, and Messrs. \*Commers, \*Cudahy, \*Gordon, and \*Johnson.

**Absent:** \*Excused

**Also Present:** Larry Soderholm, Planning Administrator; Tom Beach, Department of Safety and Inspections, Lucy Thompson, Merritt Clapp-Smith, Jessica Rosenfeld, Luis Pereira, Andrew Jacobson, Jacob Rife, Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

**I. Approval of minutes June 15, 2007.**

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Kramer moved approval of the minutes of June 15, 2007. Commissioner Rosemark seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

**II. Chair's Announcements**

Chair Alton announced the Planning Commission is invited to tour the Union Depot Concourse on Wednesday, July 11, 2007 from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. A copy of the invitation was distributed.

**III. Planning Administrator's Announcements**

Larry Soderholm reported on planning-related business at the City Council for last week and their agenda for next week.

**IV. PUBLIC HEARING:** National Great Park Chapter of the Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework – Item from the Comprehensive Planning Committee.  
(Lucy Thompson, 651/266-6578)

Chair Alton announced that today the City of Saint Paul Planning Commission is holding a public hearing on the National Great River Park Chapter of the Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework and that notice of the public hearing was published in the St. Paul Pioneer Press on June 17, 2007.

Lucy Thompson, PED, gave a brief presentation. Ms. Thompson reviewed the three themes of the chapter: more natural, more urban, and more connected. She noted that the document is being recommended as a guide to public and private investment along the 26 miles of Mississippi riverfront and in neighborhoods adjacent to the river. Staff is recommending that the principles, goals and objectives outlined in the chapter be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan updates currently underway, and into the National Great River Park Master Plan, a new chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, which will be prepared by Parks and Recreation staff in 2008.

Chair Alton read the rules of procedures for the public hearing.

The following people spoke:

1. Tom Dimond, 2119 Skyway Drive, Saint Paul, MN 55119. Mr. Dimond distributed a hand out, which he referred to as he spoke. Mr. Dimond focused on two of the three themes: more natural and more connected. He reviewed his recommended wording changes to the goals and objectives under these two themes, as well as the project ideas for each reach of the river.
2. Ms. Susan Kimberly, 697 Laurel Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55104. Ms. Kimberly is a consultant to the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, 401 Robert Street. The discussions around the Great River Park have been centered on the notion that the park should enable the City to make its urban riverfront simultaneously “more green, more connected and more urban.” The “more urban” part of this conversation has consistently received short shrift, and the Framework chapter reflects this fact. The Chamber feels that the proposed new objectives tend to place additional demands and restrictions on the nature and quality of urban development rather than create the kind of regulatory framework that would encourage it. The objective in the document that might actually provide additional density in the area suggests that the City should “strategically locate taller buildings to lessen the impact on views to and from the river.” The Critical Area Overlay District currently under consideration would prohibit buildings of greater than 60 feet in height, so one wonders what “taller buildings” this language refers to. Ms. Kimberly also reviewed the Chamber’s earlier comments on the document, which stated concerns about lack of support for the Mississippi as a “working river.”
3. Mr. Steve Komula, 434 Cherokee Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55107. Mr. Komula spoke in favor of more specific attention to the preservation of the view of the State Capitol Building from the Smith Avenue corridor on the West Side.
4. Mr. Tim Griffin, 25 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102. Mr. Griffin is Director of the St. Paul Design Center. Since, 1997 principals of the Framework have been applied citywide. On occasion, the Design Center has been invited outside the core area to provide design assistance consistent with the Framework.. Mr. Griffin stated that adoption of the Great River Park plan will provide the tools to apply the Framework along the 26 miles of riverfront in St. Paul. He urged the Planning Commission’s support of the National Great River Plan Chapter.

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Donnelly-Cohen moved to close the public hearing and refer the matter back to the Comprehensive Planning Committee. Commissioner Kramer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

Chair Alton noted that, for different reasons, three former City Council members were among the public in attendance at today's meeting.

## **V. Zoning Committee**

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#07-074-111 Mike Aeling – Site plan review and variances. 2108 Douglynn Lane.  
(Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Morton moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the site plan review. The motion carried on a vote of 15-1 (Nelson).*

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Morton moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the variances. The motion carried on a vote of 14-2 (Nelson, Smitten).*

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#07-083-622 Park Midway Bank – Conditional Use Permit for shared commercial parking in institutional lot at Luther Seminary. 2375 Como Avenue, NW corner at Luther Place.  
(Jacob Rife, 651/266-6572)

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Morton moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the conditional use permit. The motion carried on a vote of 15-0 with 1 abstention (Alton)*

#07-022-733 Home Depot – Site plan review. 395 Pascal Street North.  
(Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)

Tom Beach used the overhead projector to show pictures of the site plan. Current use is a parking lot at the back of the Midway Shopping Center, along Pascal and St. Anthony, which is the service road to I94. The entrance to the Home Depot would be on Pascal Street. To get to the parking you would come in on Pascal, drive down a private street, and go up a ramp to the roof of the building, where there would be 340 parking spaces. Deliveries for the project would be handled off of St. Anthony Street. The land owner has agreed to give up some of the land along Pascal & St. Anthony so that the sidewalk could be moved off the street to the boulevard to make it more pedestrian friendly.

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Morton moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the site plan review. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

## **VI. Comprehensive Planning Committee**

Chair Donnelly-Cohen announced the next meeting on July 10, 2007 will be at 3:30 p.m. instead of the usual 4:00 p.m. They are going to discuss the National Great River Parks Chapter and continue working on the Critical Area regulations. The staff are proposing a tour of bluffs and steep slopes to see how the regulations apply to specific houses and businesses. The committee will be very busy all summer because it will be considering the Central Corridor Development Strategy in August.

## **VII. Neighborhood and Current Planning Committee**

Update from Ford Site Planning Task Force  
(Merritt Clapp-Smith, 651/266-6547)

Merritt Clapp-Smith and Luis Pereira gave a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the Ford site project Phase I planning work. They described the purpose, timeline and meetings that occurred in the Phase I, and the five alternative development scenarios adopted by the Ford Site Planning Task Force for further analysis in Phase II. They summarized the market assessment of the site done by Colliers International and the preliminary trip generation estimates of the five scenarios done by the planning consultant team. They completed the presentation with an overview of the Phase II timeline and work to begin in Fall 2007. All of these materials are available for review on the City's website at [www.stpaul.gov/depts/ped/fordsite/](http://www.stpaul.gov/depts/ped/fordsite/)

Chair Alton announced that there will not be a Neighborhood and Current Planning Committee meeting next week.

## **VIII. Communications Committee**

Commissioner Smitten stated that the next Communication Committee meeting is August 10<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m., before the Planning Commission meeting.

## **IX. Task Force Reports**

Commissioner Kramer stated that the Land Use Comprehensive Plan met on Wednesday, June 27<sup>th</sup> on residential land use.

Larry Soderholm, announced the next Water Comprehensive Plan meeting is Monday, July 9, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. Discussion will be on surface water management.

## **X. Old Business**

None

## **XI New Business**

None

## **XII. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 9:58 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by  
Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary  
Planning and Economic Development Department,  
City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,

Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

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Larry Soderholm, AICP  
Planning Administrator

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Marilyn Porter  
Secretary of the Planning Commission

PED\Butler\June 29, 2007